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14. ABSTRACT The recent insurgency and violence in Afghanistan warrants a reaction from all sources of national power. Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 directs the military to work solutions to the Security, Stability, Transition and Reconstruction problems through interagency, even international organizations. As the Geographic Combatant Commander, Central Command currently uses the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) as its local implementer of SSSTR (broadly called development operations). Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are the recognized experts in development operations and should be consulted and included in PRT operations; however the strengths, weaknesses and culture of the two institutions often prevent open coordination. An objective analysis of the inherent benefits of each institution and their inherent weakness reveal synergistic matches which could be exploited for the overall benefit of development work in Afghanistan and to counter to the insurgency. This paper seeks to overcome the objections offered by NGOs to working with the military in Afghan PRTs and cites benefits to working together in development projects. The paper draws conclusions that NGO objections should be reconsidered in light of current data and the benefits of coordination. Also, that the current PRT staffing allows for both counterinsurgency support and humanitarian development and that the PRT framework is also flexible to respond to new tasking as security increases in Afghanistan. Finally, the paper offers recommendations for increasing civilian and NGO participation.					
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Newport, R.I.**

**TROOPS – PRTS – NGOS:  
CENTCOM’S WINNING COMBINATION  
FOR THE CURRENT INSECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN**

**by**

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**Commander, US Navy**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**31 OCTOBER 2008**

## **Abstract**

The recent insurgency and violence in Afghanistan warrants a reaction from all sources of national power. Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 directs the military to work solutions to the Security, Stability, Transition and Reconstruction problems through interagency, even international organizations. As the Geographic Combatant Commander, Central Command currently uses the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) as its local implementer of SSTR (broadly called development operations). Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are the recognized experts in development operations and should be consulted and included in PRT operations; however the strengths, weaknesses and culture of the two institutions often prevent open coordination. An objective analysis of the inherent benefits of each institution and their inherent weakness reveal synergistic matches which could be exploited for the overall benefit of development work in Afghanistan and to counter to the insurgency. This paper seeks to overcome the objections offered by NGOs to working with the military in Afghan PRTs and cites benefits to working together in development projects. The paper draws conclusions that NGO objections should be reconsidered in light of current data and the benefits of coordination. Also, that the current PRT staffing allows for both counterinsurgency support and humanitarian development and that the PRT framework is also flexible to respond to new tasking as security increases in Afghanistan. Finally, the paper offers recommendations for increasing civilian and NGO participation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Over 37,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan continue to battle Taliban insurgents in regional areas of insecurity.<sup>1</sup> As courageous and diligent as the troops are in their combat operations and missions, General Petraeus and others admit insurgent wars like this will not be won with force alone, but through a stable and free society.<sup>2</sup> The desired military end state for Afghanistan includes not only a stable government, but also a populace that can sustain a viable, legitimate economy.<sup>3</sup> Working towards a similar end state are hundreds of other players: non-military, not-for-profit, and non-government organizations.<sup>4</sup> These are the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) conducting their own operations and missions in building everything from family-owned chicken coupes to hydroelectric dams.<sup>5</sup> While economic and socio-economic development is clearly beyond the role of the military, it is within the studied expertise of NGOs.<sup>6</sup>

How can synergy, synchronization and sequencing be achieved between military and civilian NGO players? The responsibility for coordinating “missionaries, mercenaries and misfits”<sup>7</sup> (to include scientists, sociologists, economists, financiers, judges, and similar

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<sup>1</sup> JoAnne O'Bryant and Michael Waterhouse, *CRS Report for Congress: U.S. Forces in Afghanistan*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Resource Services, 15 July 2008), 1, [http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RS22633\\_20070327.pdf](http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RS22633_20070327.pdf) (accessed 28 October 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Fred W. Baker, III, “Progress More Durable in Iraq, Petraeus Says,” *American Forces Press Service News*, 9 OCT 2008, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=51455> (accessed 22 OCT 2008).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2008), 5. This is the first in a series due to Congress every 180 days.

<sup>4</sup> Unless specifically cited, for brevity, the inclusive acronym “NGO” will be used for shorthand for all non-military relief and development organizations.

<sup>5</sup> Bagram Air Base PRT Public Affairs Office, “PRT, Local Government and NGO Work Together to Bring Jobs to Panjshirei Women,” Bagram Air Base, Panjshir, Afghanistan, 18 August 2008, [www.bagram.afcent.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123115711](http://www.bagram.afcent.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123115711) (accessed on 16 October 2008). Large infrastructure projects are coordinated through the United States Assistance for International Development (USAID).

<sup>6</sup> Robert E. Hunter (principle author), Edward Goreham, and George Joulwen, Rapporteur: Christopher Chivvis, *Integrating Instruments of Power and Influence: Lessons Learned and Best Practices* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), xiv.

<sup>7</sup> “Missionaries, mercenaries and misfits” is a tongue and cheek expression presented to the author by Sam Burgess, himself an NGO worker, to generalize motivations and quality of international NGO workers.

professionals) for stability operations is placed on the shoulders of the cognizant Geographic Combat Commander.<sup>8</sup> The current implementing strategy of Central Command (CENTCOM) for coordinating regional development, particularly in insecure areas of Afghanistan, is the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT).<sup>9</sup> This paper will address improved coordination between U.S.-led Afghan PRTs and NGOs, and coalition combat troops in order to increase regional security in Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

## **BACKGROUND**

“Working well with NGOs is essential for the effective provision for relief.”<sup>11</sup> A general understanding of NGOs is the military’s first step toward successfully tapping into the rich resources these organizations have to offer in the transition and reconstruction of Afghanistan. By understanding the inherent strengths, weaknesses, and needs of NGOs and acknowledging the same of the military, synchronistic matches appear. Though very real cultural and ideological differences remain, better communication and coordination between the two will better serve both organizations.

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<sup>8</sup> Department of Defense, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*, Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3000.05 (Washington DC: DOD, 28 November 2005), 5.9-5.9.1.

<sup>9</sup> Center for Army Lessons Learned, *PRT Playbook: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, No. 07-34 (Center for Army Lessons Learned, September 2007), 55.

<sup>10</sup> PRTs in Afghanistan developed differently from their counterparts in Iraq. This paper will exclusively deal with the Afghan PRT model.

<sup>11</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization During Joint Operations*, Volume 1, Joint Publication (JP) 3.08 (Washington DC: CJCS, 1996), III-25 quoted by Daniel Byman et al., *Strengthening the Partnership: Improving Military Coordination with Relief Agencies and Allies in Humanitarian Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2000), 73.

NGO Motivations. “The military often thinks of the NGO community as naïve do-gooders vulnerable to falling into the trap of radicals.”<sup>12</sup> Many NGOs are chartered by religious organization and organizations of conscience. Their activities are motivated oftentimes by ideals and perceived enlightenment, rather than military objectives and end states. Nevertheless, many military personnel, after working alongside NGO workers in crises note their “bravery and dedication.”<sup>13</sup>

The US-based, NGO umbrella organization, InterAction, stresses that all of its affiliated NGOs as well as many other NGOs are members of a profession; and like the military profession, they adhere to a strict set of principles, even signing a binding code of conduct.<sup>14</sup> Their core values are the human imperative, independence, and impartiality (every human has the right to humanitarian assistance; NGOs must act independently of any government “agenda”; and NGOs must provide assistance without regard for nationality or political affiliation.)<sup>15</sup>

Categories of NGOs. Joint Publication 3.08, Volume 2, Appendix B, provides a representative list of NGOs, their mission specialties, countries of operation, and contact information.<sup>16</sup> No list of NGOs is exhaustive, since there are an estimated 26,000 NGOs working internationally and there is evidence of millions more working within national

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<sup>12</sup> Cheryl Benard, “Commentary: Strengthening the Partnership,” RAND Corporation, <http://www.rand.org/commentary/022205ITM.html> (accessed on 18 OCT 2008), originally published in *In Touch*, Winter 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Byman, et al., *Strengthening the Partnership*, 118.

<sup>14</sup> InterAction, Policy Brief, “InterAction on Civil Military Relations,” [www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org), Washington, DC, September 2008 (accessed on 20 OCT 2008).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. The independence and interpretation of impartiality is a point of divergence with the military; conflicting with the ideal of unity of command for unity of effort. To this point, Joint Publication 3.08, Volume I, emphasizes that military units should focus and maximize efforts on common goals between NGOs and the military unit.

<sup>16</sup> CJCS, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization during Joint Operations*, Volume 2, Joint Publication (JP) 3.08 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 17 March 2006), Appendix B, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/> (accessed 22 October 2008).

borders. Among these numerous and varied NGOs, some categorization is helpful. The RAND Corporation offers the following general NGO categories:

**Core – Team** - NGOs of sufficient size and expertise to conduct international relief or development operations, who have agreed to work with the USG.

**Core – Independent** - NGOs of sufficient size and expertise, yet who choose to work independently of the USG and or U.S. military.

**Specialized** - NGOs that work in specialized, functional areas.

**Advocacy** - NGOs that do not provide relief, but rather monitor or advocate a cause.

**Minor** - NGOs with operating budgets of less than \$30 million-- the majority of NGOs.<sup>17</sup>

NGO Strengths in Development Operations. The local advice of professional NGO workers is often the most relevant and useful information available. Often resident in the region years before military involvement, these aid workers can possess local expertise, contacts, and cultural awareness not found elsewhere. NGO organizations and specific NGO workers have lived in and among the local population for years.<sup>18</sup> Most organizations carefully plan their entrance into a new county of operation and commit to remain for “the duration;” a few remain even during times of civil strife and war. As such, they can provide invaluable insight into proposed development projects, helping ensure that they are locally tailored, not culturally disruptive, and relevant; all in order to avoid unintended second and

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<sup>17</sup> Byman, et al., *Strengthening the Partnership*, 68-72.

<sup>18</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization during Joint Operations*, Volume 1, JP 3.08 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 17 March 2006), <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/> (accessed 22 October 2008).



third order effects.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, they will be around to see long-term development projects to fruition.

In addition to (and perhaps because of) their expertise and long-term presence, NGOs often enjoy the respect, acceptance and integration of the local populace. The very nature of a combatant generally precludes this level of grass-roots trust. NGOs stress that personal relationships are at the heart of real, lasting development operations.<sup>20</sup>

Additionally, NGOs bring additional resources into the development environment. Some NGOs are directly funded by national or regional organizations (e.g., the European Union, the United Nations, etc.). Private, individual or corporate donations also support some NGOs, while other development NGOs produce income from created indigenous businesses, taking profits to support further development projects. All together, NGO involvement increases assets to the development operation, thus reducing the direct financial burden on the United States Government.

NGOs' Perception of Military Weaknesses. Beyond ideological differences, NGOs point out several inherent weaknesses with military members leading development operations: the frequent rotation of military personnel, a general focus on short-term results, the need for force protection measures, and a general lack of cultural awareness in designing development projects.<sup>21</sup> “Because military participation is unpredictable and usually short-term, investing scarce NGO time and resources into better relations often provides little benefit during actual crisis.”<sup>22</sup> NGO workers may remain with one organization for their

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<sup>19</sup> Ross Patterson (founder, Global Fusion and former Captain, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division), interview by author, 30 August 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Paterson, interview. InterAction, “Policy Brief: InterAction on Civil Military Relations,” September 2008, <http://www.interaction.org/library/detail.php?id=6457> (accessed on 20 October 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Byman, et al., *Strengthening the Partnership*, 55.

entire working lives. Comparatively, a military officer's staff assignment as NGO Liaison Officer may last two to three years, and a PRT command is roughly one year long. This comparative positional longevity is greatly disproportional. Additionally, a military officer may have multiple additional duties and is likely to serve in several theaters of operation during a career. The short duration most military leaders spend working with humanitarian missions or development programs is a key limiting factor for coordination between NGOs and the military, and highlights a potential lack of professional expertise in development.

NGO Weaknesses in the Development Operations. Relative to the U. S. military, NGOs possess limited logistics, air and water transportation, and engineering capacity.<sup>23</sup> Joint Publication 3-08 provides that: "Successful interagency, IGO, and NGO coordination enables the USG to build international support, conserve resources, and conduct coherent operations that efficiently achieve shared international goals."<sup>24</sup> If properly coordinated, the military can provide critical infrastructure, know-how, equipment and communications to fill key NGO gaps.

Most importantly, NGOs can rarely conduct development operations in an insecure environment.<sup>25</sup> Many NGOs traditionally view their independence from government actors and impartiality (neutrality) in conflicts as a guarantor of security and safety for their workers and staffs.<sup>26</sup> When conditions warrant greater personal security, NGOs are increasingly turning to outside security assistance, rather than depend upon the U.S. military, which itself may be considered a warring party.

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<sup>23</sup> Benard, "Commentary: Strengthening the Partnership," 1.

<sup>24</sup> JP 3-08, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations Vol. 1*, vii.

<sup>25</sup> Paterson, interview.

<sup>26</sup> Benard, "Commentary: Strengthening the Partnership," 2.

NGOs are numerous and varied, though some general categorization can be made. The JP 3-08 Volume 2 Appendix B lists numerous NGOs which have or will likely coordinate with U.S. military personnel. NGOs are the recognized development experts; they have long-time, local connections, and bring additional financial resources. However, many may lack critical infrastructure and are rarely able to work in an insecure operating environment.

Conversely, NGOs perceive inherent weaknesses of military leadership in the development operations as lacking expertise and relatively little time on the ground to build necessary long-term trust with the local population. Perceived strengths of the military are well-developed infrastructure and their ability to provide necessary security.

Military and NGO personnel, along with civilian political leadership, who understand the inherent strengths and weaknesses of both organizations, can maximize the efforts of both, for the benefit of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and her people.

## **DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS**

It Began in Gardez.<sup>27</sup> The first Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) was established in Gardez, Afghanistan in November of 2002.<sup>28</sup> This was not the beginning of the civil-military coordination for the United States (President Jefferson, in treaties with native Americans in the early 1800s made provisions for civil projects to ensure peace with the tribes<sup>29</sup>), but evolved as a means to coordinate the rebuilding of Afghanistan after the

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<sup>27</sup> The author served in Afghanistan from December 2005 until June 2006, as Officer in Charge of the first Navy Embedded Training Team at Gardez Garrison, with additional duties working with the Gardez PRT, nearby.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas D. Torkelson, *Ideas in Arms: The Relationship of Kinetic and Ideological Means in America's Global War on Terror*, Drew Paper No. 2 (Maxwell, AL: Air University Press, April 2008), 88.

<sup>29</sup> Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties Vol. II (Treaties)* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), 67-68, see Treaty with The Kaskaskia, 1803, 13 August 1803, 7 Stat., 78, Proclamation,

U.S. invasion and a decade of Taliban misrule. The current PRT staffing and concept appears to have two sources: security operations and Civil Affairs. The genesis of the security portion was the U.S. Marine Corps' Civil Action Program (CAP) during the Vietnam War.<sup>30</sup> Through the CAP, the Marine Corps was able to secure villages and hold them from further Viet Cong incursions. The Civil Affairs portion of the current PRTs was a response to tasking for "quick impact, high profile projects to jumpstart humanitarian civic action" thrust upon an overtaxed Civil-Military Operations staff. The Civil Affairs goal was to enhance the legitimacy of the fledgling Afghan government.<sup>31</sup> The initial scope of the PRT was small, but broadened with an increase in civilian staff members, to "extend U.S. mission-commander and indigenous-government influence into the rural areas."<sup>32</sup>

Since 2005, the U.S.-led PRTs in Afghanistan are supplemented with an 80 to 100 person staff, which includes a headquarters support detail, security detachment, and at least one representative from the Department of State (DOS), USAID, and the Department of Agriculture (DOA). The mission is now three-fold, often called the "3Ds": Defense, Development and Diplomacy.<sup>33</sup> Defined by the U.S. Army *PRT Playbook*, a PRT is now an "interim ... organization designed to operate in a semi-permissive environment... intended to improve stability in a given area by helping build the host nation's legitimacy and

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23 December 1803, which identified money to build a house for the chief, a church, and annual salary for a minister.

<sup>30</sup> Scott R. Peck, "PRTs: Improving or Undermining the Security for NGOs and PVOs in Afghanistan?" (research paper, Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, 2004), 3, <http://www.dtic.mil/> (assessed 18 October 2008). The USMC used 15-man rifle squads and a corpsman to live among Vietnamese villagers, providing security and simple improvements in living conditions, as a means to hold territory and "win hearts and minds."

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>33</sup> Michelle Parker, "Testimony," House, *Role of DOD in Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Armed Services Committee*, 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 2007, 4, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com/> (accessed 18 October 2008), 2.

effectiveness in providing security to its citizens and delivering essential government services.”<sup>34</sup>

The PRT concept lays the foundation for synergism between the strengths and weaknesses of both the military and NGOs. Straight from the *PRT Playbook*: “The military can operate in these unstable areas but lacks development skills. Diplomatic and development agencies [NGOs] have these skills but are unable to operate in these areas using their traditional delivery mechanisms because of the instability.”<sup>35</sup> Not only has the PRT concept morphed, but U.S. doctrine has also evolved to include interagency coordination.

SSTR, a New National Strategy. Beginning with National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44, in 2005 the President began the move toward interagency cooperation in international development [now called Security, Stability, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations (“SSTR”)], and designated the Secretary of State (not DOD) as the lead.<sup>36</sup> The message is clear that the military will eventually step back, letting other government agencies take the lead; using other portions of the D-I-M-E sources of national power. The DOD followed with a DoD Directive 3000.05, “Military *Support* for SSTR Operations” [emphasis added] in November 2005, tasking various levels of the DoD to prepare to work closely with relevant U.S. Departments and Agencies, foreign governments and security forces, International Organization, U.S. and foreign NGOs, and private sector, for-profit companies in carrying out operations.<sup>37</sup> Specifically, the Chairman of the JCS was tasked to develop stability operations doctrine and provide training. By December 2006, the Chairman of the

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<sup>34</sup> Center for Army Lessons Learned, *PRT Playbook: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, No. 07-34 (Center for Army Lessons Learned, September 2007), 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>36</sup> Department of Defense, *Military Support to Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Joint Operating Concept, Version 2* (Washington DC: DoD, December 2006), i.

<sup>37</sup> DODD 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*, 4.4.

JCS had produced the second version of the Joint Operating Concept (JOC) for military support to SSTR. The Geographic Combatant Commands were tasked to engage relevant Departments, NGOs, *etc.* in preparing for stability operations,<sup>38</sup> which the PRTs in Afghanistan were already doing.

The military was ready to plan, engage, and coordinate, but were the NGOs ready? The answer was largely, “No.” NGOs were not ready to work with the military, specifically the Afghan PRTs, for three reasons: first, the insecure situation precluded most direct involvement by non-combatants; second, many NGOs held to the traditional reasoning that their independence and impartiality was their force protection; and third, NGOs began to resist the PRTs’ (the military’s) encroachment into their perceived “Humanitarian Space.”<sup>39</sup> The three objections will be pursued in the rest of this paper.

Objection Number 1: NGOs Cannot Work with the PRT Because of Insurgent Violence. Since 2006, Afghanistan has seen resurgence in Taliban violence. The insurgent violence against the government of Afghanistan and the violence against NGO workers prevented their organizations from working in many parts of the country. When NGO workers leave the region, most of their projects are put on hold<sup>40</sup>

This situation highlights the capability of the PRTs’ combined military and civilian staffs, namely that NGOs stopped working because of the violence, but the PRTs did not. PRTs, with a combination of civilian and military staff, augmented with a security detail of combat troops were able to continue development projects in spite of the violence.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 5.8 and 5.9.

<sup>39</sup> Samuel A. Worthington, “Testimony,” Senate, “*Smart Power*” and *Foreign Aid: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs*, 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 2008, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com/> (accessed 21 October 2008), 7.

<sup>40</sup> Ross Paterson interview.

In a secure environment State Department's (DOS's) USAID teams could and would probably oversee all USG development for Afghanistan. The USAID budget for development projects in Afghanistan for 2007 was \$1.14 billion USD.<sup>41</sup> These professional humanitarian and development personnel generally contract with NGOs and local nationals for development of critical infrastructure. DOD 3000.05 aptly states, "Many stability operations tasks are best performed by indigenous, foreign, or U.S. civilian professionals."<sup>42</sup> However, the PRT, because of its assigned security detachment, is best suited to conduct reconstruction when insecurity predominates. Dr. George Meyerle from the Center for Naval Analysis observed, "None match the PRTs' capacity to complete projects in contested areas. This is something PRTs do regularly, working side by side with U.S. combat units in the field."<sup>43</sup> NGOs generally cannot continue development in an insecure environment, but the PRT can.

In addition to purely humanitarian development projects, PRTs coordinate development projects in support of CENTCOM's ongoing counterinsurgency efforts. Counterinsurgency "best practices" include strengthening the legitimacy of the central government by delivering goods and services expected of a government, removing insurgent influence over the populace, and cutting off insurgents from their support.<sup>44</sup> "Absent the

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<sup>41</sup> Government Accounting Office (GAO), *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq*, GAO-08-905RSU (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 26 September 2008).

<sup>42</sup> DODD 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*, 4.3.

<sup>43</sup> Gerald Meyerle, e-mail to the author, 16 October 2008. Dr. Meyerle is part of a Center for Naval Analysis research team that is completing a yet-to-be published report on the effectiveness of U.S.-led PRTs in Afghanistan.

<sup>44</sup> U.S. Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for Countering Irregular Threats: An Updated Approach to Counterinsurgency Operations*, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 7 June 2006.

PRT, the ‘build’ in clear-hold-build efforts deemed essential to effective counterinsurgency would fall flat.”<sup>45</sup> PRT projects assist the counterinsurgency as well as development.

Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) is the designation of funds used to pay for both humanitarian and counterinsurgency development projects.<sup>46</sup> CERP funds are limited to \$25,000 USD per project and various other regulations, such as, that it be a project that benefits the general Afghan populace. The 2007 budget for CERP in Afghanistan was \$109 million USD.<sup>47</sup> The PRT commander can coordinate with the USAID representative for additional funds for large, infrastructure projects.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, most military units in Afghanistan can request CERP funding for their own development projects. CERP funding allows focused, local development projects which benefit the populace and security.

An example of development and counterinsurgency projects working together was the Khost Province in 2007. The coordination between the PRT, the regional brigade commander and the local battalion commander was praised by visiting Secretary of Defense, Secretary Mr. Gates as “a model of concerted counterinsurgency effort ...[that is] having tangible results.”<sup>49</sup> Khost is located on the Pakistani border, amid the federally administered tribal areas. Though the population was generally pro-government, the sharp increase in assassination attempts, IEDs and suicide car bombs was beginning to turn the people away from the Afghan government, towards the insurgents. With a combined strategy and separate lines of CERP funding, the three military leaders began a “blitz” of projects: over \$22 million USD in large-scale infrastructure projects that entailed roughly 50 schools, 300 wells,

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<sup>45</sup> Gerald Meyerle, e-mail to the author.

<sup>46</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq: Report to Congressional Committees* (Washington, DC: GAO, 1 October 2008), 11.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Tom Shanker, “Top Officials Greet Gates in Kabul with Pleas,” *The New York Times*: Kabul, Afghanistan, 4 December 2007, [www.nytimes.com/2007/12/05/washington/05gates.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/05/washington/05gates.html) (accessed 26 October 2008).



30 dams, and over 50 kilometers of roads.<sup>50</sup> All of the projects were coordinated with the provincial governor and local elder meetings to increase “buy-in”, participation, and legitimacy of government rule. Road construction projects were directed into the heart of the most insecure districts. Moreover, with paved roadway access, IEDs are harder to emplace and the resulting increased commerce and social networking is a proven method of reducing insurgent violence. The strategy “won” on several fronts, causing the chairman of the Khost Provincial Council to say, “The Taliban... have been unable to separate the people from the government.” This was a key success that could not be accomplished by NGOs working alone, because of the level of violence in the area.

In response to the NGOs’ first objection to working with the PRTs, it is true that insurgent violence has caused them setbacks. However, the PRT has an embedded security element and is positioned to effectively work with local combat troops to carry development projects that employ counterinsurgency best practices in order to reduce the violence experienced by all. In the same manor that the military portion of the PRT supports the civilian USAID staff to continue development operations during insecurity, the PRT also could support approved, Core-Team NGOs.

Objection Number 2: Some NGOs believe their independence and impartiality are their means of protection from violence. The International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent are very careful to avoid all appearances of collaboration with any national or sectarian organization. In so doing, they have a long history of unfettered, international access to Prisoners of War and displaced civilians. Surely, this kind of NGO cross-border access would be hampered by even a perception by belligerents of betrayal of their trust.

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<sup>50</sup> Gerald Meyerle, e-mail to the author.

However, modern perceptions of NGOs are changing. The following statement was faxed from the Taliban to the Associated Press in October of 2003: "Our government has always respected the people who are working in NGOs that really want to build Afghanistan.... But there is another kind of NGO which only uses the name NGO but is actually working and spying for the United States. We advise Taliban all over the country to attack them and extradite them from Afghanistan."<sup>51</sup> Afghanistan has a long history of intolerance toward foreign invaders. Though this fax speaks of "another kind of NGO," the resulting attacks have shown little to no connection with NGOs and their proximity to coalition military.

Statistical analysis of the violence against Afghanistan NGO workers was conducted by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. They found no statistical correlation between violence against NGO workers and their proximity to military units.<sup>52</sup> The reasoning that independent and impartial, non-combatants will be accepted by belligerents as neutral, and therefore not targeted, does not appear to remain valid, particularly in tribal regions of Afghanistan.

Objection Number 3: Some NGOs Believe PRTs Are Encroaching on the Exclusive "Humanitarian Space" of Professional Aid Workers. The NGO umbrella organization, InterAction, publishes a "Guidelines for Relations Between U.S. Armed Forces and Non-Governmental Humanitarian Organizations in Hostile or Potentially Hostile

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<sup>51</sup> Scott Baldauf, "Aid Groups in Afghanistan Weigh Good Deeds vs. Safety," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Salar, Afghanistan: 28 October 2003, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/1028/p07s01-wosc.htm>, (accessed 27 October 2008).

<sup>52</sup> Clinton Watts, *Indicators of NGO Security in Afghanistan*, IP 653: Security and Development (West Point, NY: The Combating Terrorism Center, 14 December 2004), 1, 17-18. This research indicates no correlation between the proximity with US military personnel and increased violence. The greatest correlating factor to violence against NGOs was the increased proximity of NGO operations to the Afghan-Pakistani boarder.

Environments.”<sup>53</sup> Many of the guidelines are practical issues to respect organizational cultures and avoid misidentification of parties. One guideline would prohibit the U.S. armed forces from describing NGOs as “force multipliers” or “partners.” Another guideline allows for and encourages liaison between the military and NGOs, but to conduct them away from military installations and in small numbers.<sup>54</sup> There is little disagreement between the published guidelines and military intentions.

However, in Congressional testimony, the President and CEO of InterAction requests “boundaries of Humanitarian and Development Space.”<sup>55</sup> The CEO states: “People in the military are trained to be warriors, those in the State Department to be diplomats and the men and women at UASID, MCC [Millennium Challenge Corporation], and similar agencies are trained to do development.”<sup>56</sup>

Here, DODD 3000.05 agrees with InterAction, but takes a necessary exception. “Integrated civilian and military efforts are key to successful stability operations.... Many stability operations tasks are best performed by indigenous, foreign or U.S. civilian professionals. *Nonetheless, U.S. military forces shall be prepared to perform all tasks necessary to establish or maintain order when civilians cannot do so.*”<sup>57</sup>[Emphasis added.]

Afghanistan has an ongoing insurgency; therefore “business is *not* conducted as usual.” At this time, CENTCOM has determined the military must do development work. CENTCOM has staffed, resourced, and tasked [and Congress funded] the PRTs to do so and

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<sup>53</sup> InterAction, *Guidelines for Relations Between U.S. Armed Forces and Non-Governmental Humanitarian Organizations in Hostile or Potentially Hostile Environments*, [www.interaction.org/files.cgi/5896\\_InterAction\\_US\\_Mil\\_CivMil\\_Guidelines\\_July\\_07\\_flat.pdf](http://www.interaction.org/files.cgi/5896_InterAction_US_Mil_CivMil_Guidelines_July_07_flat.pdf) (accessed on 21 October 2008).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Samuel A. Worthington, Senate, ‘*Smart Power*’ and *Foreign Aid*, 7.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> DODD 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*, 4.4 and 4.3.

“none match the PRTs’ capacity to complete projects in contested areas.”<sup>58</sup> InterAction appears to overlook the fact that PRT staffs consist of military, State Department, and USAID members. As one USAID representative testified to the House of Representatives: “The PRT is not a physical structure; it is a platform for components of U.S. National Security to coordinate.”<sup>59</sup> PRT teams are built with military and civilian presence so effective development work can be planned and can be continued during hostilities.<sup>60</sup>

Additionally, InterAction does not have a strategic objective of ending a counterinsurgency.<sup>61</sup> The PRT-coordinated “blitz” in Khost, Afghanistan is a good example of “targeted” development projects being used to frustrate the insurgency and humanitarian development. The PRT can combine development with a coordinated counterinsurgency plans, plans that increase the stability of Afghanistan for all players; impartial Core-Independent, Advocacy and Minor NGOs included.

## CONCLUSIONS

U.S.-led Afghan PRTs are the path to future success (particularly in the current insecure regions of Afghanistan) because they support counterinsurgency best practices and the emerging SSTR Joint Concept of Operations. Counterinsurgencies require new ways of thinking and attacking problems. In recognition of the need for diverse problem solving, the Clinton Administration’s NSPD-44 and subsequent DODD 3000.05 require interagency as

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<sup>58</sup> Gerald Meyerle, e-mail to the author, 16 October 2008.

<sup>59</sup> Michelle Parker, “Testimony,” House, *Role of DOD in Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Armed Services Committee*, 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 2007, 4, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com/> (accessed 18 October 2008). Michelle Parker was the USAID representative to the PRT in Jalalabad, Afghanistan from July 2004 until February 2006.

<sup>60</sup> On a separate level, some would consider InterAction’s proposed exclusion of military personnel from any humanitarian work as an affront to personal responsibility and humanity. The Biblical account even references a Roman centurion (a leader in the occupying forces over Israel) described by the local Jewish elders as one whom: “loves our country and ... built us our synagogue.” Luke 7:5 (New American Standard Bible).

<sup>61</sup> InterAction’s code of ethics requires NGO workers to grant human relief on an impartial basis.

well as joint participation in SSTR operations. PRTs are staffed with joint-service personnel from diverse service communities: combatants, civil affairs, engineers, and Intelligence personnel. The PRTs also include civilian staff from Department of State, USAID and Department of Agriculture (USDA). Other agencies were initially reluctant or unable to staff their civilian positions, but civilian staffing levels are now almost 100 percent.<sup>62</sup> The current PRT structure allows for increased civilian positions and increased NGO cooperation.

NGOs' objections to working with the military no longer appear valid and should be reconsidered, for the overall improvement of conditions in Afghanistan. "Humanitarian Aid Worker" status in Afghanistan no longer guarantees safety, and statistics and perceptions do not support NGOs being targeted specifically for working with the military.

Well-developed joint PRT-NGO projects can be organized that would survive both the relatively frequent rotation of military personnel and the insecure periods when NGO workers must pull out. PRTs possess the secure transportation assets and troops to oversee development projects, especially construction projects, during insecure periods when NGOs cannot. Current national guidance and DOD directives allow for collaboration between PRTs and NGOs, because NGOs are the recognized experts in effective, long-term development projects. NGOs who believe humanitarian aid and development are an exclusive "humanitarian space" should consider the synergy available between the military's strengths and weaknesses and those of their own organizations.<sup>63</sup> The civilian staffing within the PRT even allows for civilian-to-civilian interface if required. Respect for the expertise of

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<sup>62</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq: Report to Congressional Committees* (Washington, DC: GAO, 1 October 2008), 8.

<sup>63</sup> Benard, "Commentary: Strengthening the Partnership," 3.

each organization allows for coordination of the same.<sup>64</sup> The issue of working together should be cooperative—using the best efforts of each party to strengthen the development effort.

PRTs, however, conduct not only humanitarian development, but also coordinate development projects to counter the current insurgency. CERP spending is divided between humanitarian development and counterinsurgency development projects. However, both satisfy the goal of extending the government influence of Afghanistan, both separate and diminish the insurgents' influence over the people, both further the security and stability of a free Afghanistan. The distinction between the two types of projects may be simply a matter of prioritization and coordination, rather than motivation and purpose. A road built to increase access to insurgent-dominated areas, like those described in Khost Province, are roads that would eventually be constructed, and serve equally all people with increased commerce. Distinctions between funding for PRT counterinsurgency projects and humanitarian projects are not of great value.

CENTCOM should consider changing the current PRT staffing structure as security in Afghanistan improves. The PRT structure was altered since its inception in November 2002 until it was solidified in 2005. The changes were a response to changes in the operating environment (particularly, an increased insurgency) and needs of the Combatant Commander (namely, increased Civil Affairs). As CENTCOM observes security increases in a region, the PRT framework is flexible to make a corresponding shift in PRT staff.

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<sup>64</sup> The positive and proactive examples of Belgian and French joint military-NGO operations is highlighted in Byman, et al., *Strengthening the Partnership*, 125-132.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue funding and supporting PRTs and allow the PRT to change size and force structure as security in Afghanistan increases and the intergovernmental agency capabilities of the USG increases. The current PRT framework allows for it and should be used. Separating the defense, development and diplomatic functions may weaken the gains that have been made.

To the disdain of some NGOs, CERP funds are used for projects designed for counterinsurgency purposes as well as humanitarian development projects. Both types of projects benefit the people of Afghanistan. Drawing distinctions in lines of accounting may prove difficult and non-beneficial, and therefore avoided, if politically possible.

The DOS, DOD and CENTCOM should pursue coordinated projects with Core-Team NGOs to increase the breadth and quality of development in Afghanistan. Specific lists of approved NGOs and projects can be vetted through the political, legal and military channels. PRTs have engineers, planners and civilian staff members who can coordinate such projects with NGOs. Augmented with PRT security forces, PRTs can continue to monitor those projects when NGOs cannot.<sup>65</sup>

The concept of coordinated operations is not new, but now needs to be applied to development projects in Afghanistan. Now is the time for the U.S.-led Afghanistan PRTs, as

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<sup>65</sup> Michael P. Dombrowski, in his Masters Thesis, provides a detailed look at the depth of coordination and planning which could be achieved in joint military and NGO development projects. He proposes a regular planning document, like the Air Tasking Order, from which any military unit in the vicinity of a development project could provide security for the project and coordinate necessary oversight. See "Improving Interagency Planning and Execution at the Operational Level: Creating a Stability and Reconstruction Component within a Joint Task Force." Master's thesis, Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and Staff College, 2006. <http://www.dtic.mil>.

Central Command's implementer of national policy, to work jointly with NGOs on mutually beneficial projects. U.S. troops will benefit, as well as all the people of Afghanistan.



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